



Committee on
HOMELAND SECURITY
Chairman Peter T. King

Opening Statement

June 19, 2012

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Statement of Chairman Rogers (R-AL)

Subcommittee on Transportation Security

"Is TSA's Planned Purchase of CAT/BPSS a Wise Use of Taxpayer Dollars?"

June 19, 2012

Remarks as Prepared

I would like to welcome everyone to this hearing and thank our witnesses. We look forward to your testimony.

TSA has plans to purchase Credential Authentication Technology/Boarding Pass Scanning Systems, commonly referred to as CAT/BPSS.

Eventually, the idea is to have this technology replace today's manual travel document-checking process with an automated process.

While CAT/BPSS may assist screeners in detecting fake IDs and boarding passes, TSA has not addressed several fundamental weaknesses in the technology that could render it ineffective.

As TSA attempts to re-brand itself as a threat-driven agency, CAT/BPSS sticks out like a sore thumb.

Here are three of the problems we have identified with this looming purchase:

1. CAT/BPSS is not integrated into TSA's other security layers, such as the terrorist watch list,
2. The costs of CAT/BPSS have grown exponentially since TSA first started looking at this.

According to TSA figures, acquisition went from \$35 million to \$115 million and projected lifecycle costs went from \$83 million to \$150 million

And finally,

3. TSA plans to purchase over 1,000 of these units over the span of a few months. That does not appear to be a risk-based approach.

And for those who don't know, TSA already has a lot of extra equipment sitting in storage. Mr. Hoggan, we don't need any more.

This hearing will provide an important opportunity to hear more about TSA's plans for CAT/BPSS and examine whether the technology makes us more secure and is a wise use of taxpayer dollars.

Last week I sent Administrator Pistole a letter expressing my concerns with the technology. If there is no objection, I want to insert that letter into the record at this time.

Mr. Hoggan, while you are very new to your position, this Subcommittee has held a number of hearings on technology procurement reform at TSA in which we identified a long list of procurement problems and heard testimony from your predecessor.

While we are beginning to see some general improvements, I am concerned that CAT/BPSS falls into the same familiar pattern of TSA procurement and completely misses the mark.

At this point, I think CAT/BPSS is a Band-Aid measure to solving a complex problem.

The travel document checker can't perform the way we want him or her to, so instead of revising training standards, management protocols, and operational procedures, TSA is looking for a quick fix.

While an automated process makes sense, TSA has not addressed flaws that plague the technology, and more importantly, TSA checkpoint operations as a whole.

Today, I expect concrete answers about the benefits and gaps associated with CAT/BPSS, and exactly what changed your mind about it.

Based on information the Committee received late on Friday, you have decided to postpone procurement of this technology until next year.

I am encouraged by that news, but I can assure you that our oversight of this program, and other acquisitions, will continue to be robust.

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